

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00
DOTE-00 EB-08 FMC-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 CG-00 DLOS-09
OES-06 ST-01 AID-05 IGA-02 AGRE-00 /062 W
-----151149Z 088977 /22

R 141130Z APR 77

FM AMCONSUL DURBAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2541

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPETOWN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

COMMIDEASTFOR

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L DURBAN 0200

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: EWWT, PINT, MZ, SF

SUBJ: MOZAMBIQUE PORT CONDITIONS VIEWED FROM DURBAN

REF: MAPUTO 343 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. GENERAL AND CONTINUING DETERIORATION OF PORT
CONDITIONS AT MAPUTO (REFTEL) ARE COMMON ALSO TO BEIRA AND
NACALA, ACCORDING TO POST'S INFORMATION. WORSENING SITUATION
MAY PROMPT US SHIPPING LINES TO CONSIDER ELIMINATING ALTOGETHER
SERVICE TO THESE PORTS. SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER,
IS DEMONSTRABLY INTENT ON IMPROVING
MAPUTO PORT OPERATIONS AND IS OFFERING SUBSTANTIAL HELP TO
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MOZAMBIQUE RAILWAYS AND HARBORS ORGANIZATION DESPITE AVAILABILITY
OF ALTERNATE PORT FACILITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA. SAG'S ACTION
MAY BE DESIGNED IN PART TO CREATE ECONOMIC INCENTIVE FOR MOZAMBIQUE
GOVERNMENT RESTRAINT IN ITS FUTURE POLITICAL OR OTHER ACTIONS
VIS-A-VIS SOUTH AFRICA. SAG ACTION COULD ADDITIONALLY
REFLECT PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS INCLUDING TIME NEEDED FOR
PREPARATION OF RICHARDS BAY AND DURBAN HARBORS FOR HEAVIER

FUTURE USE OR FACTOR OF RELATIVE SHIPPING COSTS TO AND FROM VARIOUS PORTS. ADDITIONAL COMMENT FROM ADDRESSEES WOULD BE USEFUL. END SUMMARY.

2. REFTEL REPORTED DETERIORATING CONDITIONS IN MAPUTO HARBOR. POST RECENTLY HAS HAD OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS MOZAMBIQUE SITUATION WITH LOCAL U.S. FLAG LINES REPRESENTATIVES AND WITH REP OF A MAJOR U.S. ORE EXPORTER, ALL OF WHOM FREQUENTLY VISIT MOZAMBIQUE AND HAVE SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR COMPANIES' OPERATIONS IN MOZAMBIQUE. THEIR STATEMENTS UNANIMOUSLY CONFIRMED INFORMATION IN MAPUTO REFTEL, ESPECIALLY RE INSUFFICIENT NUMBERS OF SERVICEABLE LOCOMOTIVES, FORK LIFTS AND CRANES; UNSKILLED OPERATORS FOR SAME; LACK OF TRAINED MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL, UNPRODUCTIVE DOCK LABORERS; LACK OF COMPREHENSION OF PROBLEMS BY PORT AUTHORITIES AND GPRM; AND INADEQUATE HARBOR DREDGING AND UNAVAILABILITY OF CURRENT MAPS. SOURCES SAY SAME GENERAL DETERIORATION EXTENDS TO BEIRA AND NACALA WITH SIMILAR SCOPE AND DETAILS OF PROBLEMS.

3. POST HAS JUST OBTAINED COPY OF MINUTES OF A MARCH 16 MEETING BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICAN RAILWAYS AND HARBORS (SAR&H), MOZAMBIQUE RAILWAYS (CFM), S.A. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, AND ASSOCIATION OF SHIPPING LINES (ASL). MEETING WAS CALLED FOR SHIPPERS' BENEFIT AND APPARENTLY WAS FOLLOW-ON TO MEETING BETWEEN SARH AND CFM REPORTED REFTEL. (COPY OF MINUTES POUNCHED ACTION ADDRESSEES AND S.A. POSTS.) MINUTES REFLECT DEFENSIVE ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF CFM PARTICIPANTS ALTHOUGH THEY ADMIT REAL PROBLEMS HAVE DEVELOPED AND ARE INTERESTED IN OBTAINING OUTSIDE HELP TO RESOLVE THEM. SARH APPEARED EQUALLY INTERESTED IN CONFIDENTIAL

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PROVIDING ASSISTANCE INCLUDING THE LOAN OF LOCOMOTIVES, REPAIR OF CFM EQUIPMENT IN S.A. YARDS, AND SECONDING SOUTH AFRICAN PERSONNEL TO CFM TO HANDLE MAINTENANCE AND TRAINING PROBLEMS. MINUTES ALSO INDICATED THAT NETHERLANDS GOVERNMENT OFFERED TO PROVIDE AID IN FORM OF HARBOR DREDGE AND CREW TO PERFORM LONG NEGLECTED DESILTING OPERATIONS IN MAPUTO HARBOR. (A DURBAN SHIPS AGENT HAS TOLD US, HOWEVER, THAT THIS PLAN IS ENCOUNTERING DIFFICULTY SINCE DUTCH CREW OF DREDGE, CURRENTLY WORKING AT RICHARDS BAY, KNOWS OF DIFFICULT LIVING CONDITIONS IN MAPUTO AND HAS ASKED ITS HOME OFFICE TO INFORM DUTCH GOVERNMENT THAT THEY WILL NOT AGREE TO WORK IN MAPUTO.)

4. FOREIGN PERSONNEL. SOURCES SAY MAJORITY OF PILOTS AT THREE MOZAMBIQUE POSTS NOW ARE RUSSIAN BUT ARE GENERALLY NOT HIGHLY QUALIFIED AT THIS WORK. SOURCES NEW OF NO OTHER FOREIGN PERSONNEL (ASIDE FOR PORTUGUESE) INVOLVED IN PORT ADMINISTRATION AT ANY OF THREE PORTS.

5. COST OF OPERATIONS. SOURCES TOLD US THAT DELAYS AND

INEFFICIENCIES HAVE RAISED COST OF LOADING A TON OF FREIGHT IN THE THREE MOZAMBIQUE PORTS TO NEARLY DOUBLE THAT OF DURBAN. MANY SOUTH AFRICAN IMPORTERS, WHO MAY DESIGNATE PORT THROUGH WHICH THEY WISH GOODS SHIPPED, HAVE REPORTEDLY CEASED USING MAPUTO ALREADY. S.A. EXPORTERS, HOWEVER, ARE AT MERCY OF SARH WHICH DETERMINES WHICH PORTS WILL BE USED AND REQUIRES MANY EXPORTERS STILL TO USE MAPUTO. REDUCTION IN LEVELS OF IMPORTS TO S.A. VIA MAPUTO HAS ALREADY BROUGHT ONE U.S. LINE (LYKES) TO CANCEL CALLS AT THAT PORT, ALTHOUGH THEY STILL CALL AT NACALA AND BEIRA FOR MALAWI TEA. BOTH MOORE-MACCORMACK AND LYKES SAY THEY ARE CLOSELY MONITORING OVERALL COSTS OF MOZAMBIQUE OPERATIONS AND BELIEVE THEY MAY BE FAST APPROACHING POINT WHERE THEY MAY HAVE TO SUSPEND FURTHER SERVICE ON ECONOMIC GROUNDS.

6. COMMENT: S.A. POSTS OF RICCHARDS BAY AND DURBAN BOTH EITHER HAVE OR WILL HAVE SPARE PORT CAPACITY ALTHOUGH THEY ARE CONFIDENTIAL

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FURTHER FROM THE REEF AREA THAN MAPUTO. WITH ADVENT OF FULL-SCALE CONTAINERIZATION IN JULY 1977 DURBAN SPARE CAPACITY WILL ALSO INCREASE AND LIKELY BECOME A PERMANENT FEATURE UNLESS THE S.A. ECONOMY STRONGLY REBOUNDS. RICHARDS BAY IS CAPABLE OF BEING FURTHER DEVELOPED TO HANDLE EXISTING MAPUTO TRAFFIC SHOULD SAG SO DECIDE. IT IS LINKED TO TRANSVAAL NOW WITH MODERN RAIL FACILITIES. THE RECENTLY-SHOWN SAG INTEREST IN KEEPING MAPUTO GOING WOULD APPEAR, FROM DURBAN, TO BE BASED ON SEVERAL POSSIBLY COMPLEMENTARY FACTORS. THE SAG MAY WISH TO RETAIN SOME FORM OF WORKING LINKS WITH THE GPRM (IN ABSENCE OF DIPLO-MATIC TIES) WITH THE HOPE ALSO OF ESTABLISHING ECONOMIC LEVERAGE BASED ON IMPORTANCE OF MOZAMBIQUE EARNINGS FROM PORT OPERATIONS. IT IS EASILY CONCEIVABLE THAT THE SAG MAY REGARD KEEPING MAPUTO OPERATIONAL, EVEN AT EXCESS COST TO SAG, AS A WAY OF CREATING INCENTIVE FOR RESTRAINT BY GPRM IN ITS FUTURE POLICIES TOWARD SOUTH AFRICA. (SAG APPEARS READY TO ACCEPT STRONG RHETORICAL OPPOSITION FROM MOZAMBIQUE AS PART OF THE RELATIONSHIP.) OTHER FACTORS HOWEVER MAY INCLUDE THE TIME NEEDED TO PREPARE RICHARDS BAY AND PERHAPS DURBAN FOR HEAVIER FUTURE BURDENS, OR ELSE THE FACTORING IN OF RELATIVE TO- AND FROM-PORT SHIPPING COSTS IN SAG DECISIONS ON OPTIMUM PORTS TO USE. MAPUTO, PRETORIA AND JOHANNESBURG MAY HAVE ADDITIONAL VIEWS ON THESE CONSIDERATIONS AND THEIR COMMENTS WOULD BE MOST USEFUL.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PORT FACILITIES, STEAMSHIP LINES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 14-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977DURBAN00200
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770131-0660
Format: TEL
From: DURBAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770458/aaaabyz.tel
Line Count: 164
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 MAPUTO 343
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2810085
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MOZAMBIQUE PORT CONDITIONS VIEWED FROM DURBAN
TAGS: EWWT, PINT, ETRN, MZ, SF, US
To: STATE MAPUTO
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/572eb2a5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009